

percent. And we haven't started our work yet—I mean, the profound work. So this is the—quite a situation. I mean, the attention to this issue in the parliament for the last 2 months just made that big progress, and the nation started knowing better what NATO is and what its concept is. So I think everything will be fine.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11 a.m. in the House of Chimaeras at the Presidential Secretariat. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia. President Yushchenko and some reporters spoke in Ukrainian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine in Kiev

April 1, 2008

Madam Prime Minister, Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, thank you for your warm welcome. Laura and I are honored to stand with you on Ukrainian soil, and we bring the greetings of the American people, or as you would say, "*Vitayu vas.*"

The people of Ukraine have made great contributions to the history of human freedom. During World War II, Ukrainian soldiers helped defeat the armies of fascism and end the deadliest conflict in history. And at the end of the cold war, Ukrainians formed an independent nation and declared your desire to live in freedom and peace.

In 2004, Ukrainians inspired the world with the Orange Revolution, using peaceful demonstrations to protect your right to choose your leaders. Today, Ukrainians are showing courage in helping to advance freedom in many parts of the world. You're helping to train security forces in Iraq, supporting a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan. Ukrainians are part of the U.N. mission in Kosovo. Last month in Kosovo, a Ukrainian police officer gave his life and many others were wounded helping to defend the ideals of freedom.

Ukraine is contributing to every mission of the NATO alliance and honoring the ideals that unite the transatlantic community. This

week, Ukraine seeks to strengthen its transatlantic ties through a NATO Membership Action Plan. The United States strongly supports your request. We are proud to stand with you in Bucharest and beyond.

Mr. President, our two nations share a common vision for the future. We seek to advance the cause of freedom and help all peoples of Europe live together in security and peace. With great confidence in that future, I offer a toast to you, to your gracious wife, and to a free and sovereign people of Ukraine.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. at the Presidential Secretariat. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Yuliya Tymoshenko and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Yatseniuk Arseniy Petrovych of Ukraine; and Kateryna Mykhailivna Yushchenko, wife of President Yushchenko. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Yushchenko.

Remarks Following a Tour of School 57 in Kiev

April 1, 2008

Thank you all very much for letting Laura and me come by your school. And thank you all for coming. You did an excellent job. And we love the Peace Corps. They're great, aren't they? Yes.

Listen, Laura and I are very impressed by your country. It's exciting to be in a place that has come through a very difficult period and now heading toward freedom. And the future of your country is going to depend on you. And it's very important for you to be involved with the future of your country.

And so how do you do that? Well, one, you demand to make sure that your Government is—doesn't have corruption; that you insist that the Government respond to the will of the people, not to the whims of a few. People will say, oh, your voice doesn't matter. It does matter.

The other thing is, make sure you get—you know, keep your education going and then contribute to your society. And you can do it all kinds of ways. You can be a teacher;